

Serial No. 10/773,859

Amendment dated April 4, 2006

Response to Office Action dated October 7, 2005

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (original) A flooring plank, comprising:
 - a decorative upper surface;
 - a core layer providing support and stability to the flooring plank, the core layer including a plurality of edges adapted for engagement with adjacent flooring planks during the installation of flooring planks;
 - a backing layer secured to an underside of the core layer, the backing layer comprising at least one sheet of resin impregnated paper and an antimicrobial agent acting upon unwanted biological organisms so as to inhibit the growth of mold, mildew, bacteria or other unwanted biological agents adjacent an underside of the flooring plank.
2. (original) The flooring plank according to claim 1, wherein the decorative upper surface is high pressure decorative laminate.
3. (original) The flooring plank according to claim 1, wherein the core layer is medium density fiberboard or particle board.
4. (original) The flooring plank according to claim 1, wherein the edges of the core layer are treated with a sealant containing an antimicrobial agent.

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5. (original) The flooring plank according to claim 4, wherein the antimicrobial agent applied to the edges of the core layer is a chlorophenol.
6. (original) The flooring plank according to claim 1, wherein the antimicrobial agent applied to the backing layer is a water-based iodinated sulfone.
7. (original) The flooring plank according to claim 1, wherein the backing layer is composed of a first sheet and a second sheet of resin impregnated kraft paper consolidated under heat and pressure to form a laminate.
8. (original) The flooring plank according to claim 7, wherein the first sheet is a phenolic resin impregnated kraft paper and the second sheet is impregnated with both melamine and phenolic resin, the second sheet including a first surface coated with the phenolic resin and a second surface coated with the melamine such that the second surface is exposed when the backing layer is secured to the core layer.
9. (original) The flooring plank according to claim 8, wherein the antimicrobial agent is incorporated in the melamine applied to the second surface of the second sheet of the backing layer.
10. (original) The flooring plank according to claim 9, wherein the antimicrobial agent is a water-based iodinated sulfone

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11. (original) A method for forming a flooring plank which inhibits the growth of unwanted organisms, comprising the following steps:

forming a backing layer comprising at least one sheet of resin impregnated paper, the backing layer being formed so as to include an antimicrobial agent acting upon unwanted biological organisms;

securing the backing layer to an underside of a core layer having a decorative surface along its upper surface, the backing layer being secured to the underside of the core layer so as to inhibit the growth of mold, mildew, bacteria and other unwanted biological agents adjacent an underside of the flooring plank.

12. (original) The method according to claim 11, further including the step of securing a decorative layer of high pressure decorative laminate to a side of the core layer opposite the backing layer.

13. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the core layer is medium density fiberboard or particle board.

14. (original) The method according to claim 11, further including the step of treating edges of the core layer with a sealant containing an antimicrobial agent.

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15. (original) The method according to claim 14, wherein the antimicrobial agent applied to the edges of the core layer is a chlorophenol.
16. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the antimicrobial agent is a water-based iodinated sulfone.
17. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the backing layer is composed of a first sheet and a second sheet of resin impregnated kraft paper consolidated under heat and pressure to form a laminate.
18. (original) The method according to claim 17, wherein the first sheet is a phenolic resin impregnated kraft paper and the second sheet is impregnated with both melamine and phenolic resin, the second sheet including a first surface coated with the phenolic resin and a second surface coated with the melamine such that the second surface is exposed when the backing layer is secured to the core layer.
19. (original) The method according to claim 18, wherein the antimicrobial agent is incorporated in the melamine applied to the second surface of the second sheet of the backing layer.
20. (original) The method according to claim 19, wherein the antimicrobial agent is a water-based iodinated sulfone.

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21. (new) A flooring plank, comprising:

a decorative upper surface;

a core layer providing support and stability to the flooring plank, the core layer including a plurality of edges adapted for engagement with adjacent flooring planks during the installation of flooring planks;

a backing layer secured to an underside of the core layer, the backing layer comprising at least one sheet of resin impregnated paper, the paper being impregnated on one side with a first resin and being impregnated on an opposite side with a second resin, different from the first resin, the second resin including an antimicrobial agent acting upon unwanted biological organisms so as to inhibit the growth of mold, mildew, bacteria or other unwanted biological agents adjacent an underside of the flooring plank.